

Die Sabbati 31. Januarii 1703.

ORdered by the Lords Spiritual and Temporal in Parliament assembled, That the Thanks of this House be, and are hereby given to the Lord Bishop of *Lincoln*, for his Sermon Preached before this House yesterday in the *Abbey Church* in *Westminster*, and that he be desired to print and publish the same.

MATTH. JOHNSON,
Cler' Parliamentor'

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A
SERMON
PREACH'D before the
House of Lords,
AT THE
ABBHEY-CHURCH
IN
WESTMINSTER,
On *Friday, Jan. XXX. MDCCVII.*

By the Right Reverend Father in God,
WILLIAM Lord Bishop of *Lincoln.*

LONDON,
Printed by W. B. for RICHARD SARE, at
Grays-Inn-Gate in Holborn, 1708.

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On Friday, XXX. NOVEMBER.

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Mat. xxvi. 51, 52.

And behold one of them which were with JESUS stretched out his hand, and drew his Sword, and stroke a Servant of the High-Priest, and smote off his Ear.

Then said JESUS unto him, Put up again thy Sword into his place; for All they that take the Sword, shall perish with the Sword.

IN these Words we have an account of what pass'd between St. Peter, and one of those John xviii. 10, 11. who came to apprehend our Blessed Lord, in order to his Crucifixion. The Chief Priests, and Scribes, had now resolved upon his Death; and Judas, who betray'd him, had brought their Soldiers to the Place where he was to be taken. The Guard had laid hold on Him, and were just ready to carry him away to his Enemies; when Peter, not able any longer to endure such a Violence to be offered to his dear Master, drew his Sword, and began in his well-meant, tho' inconsiderate Zeal, to engage in good earnest for his Rescue: *And behold one of them which were with JESUS stretched out his hand, and drew his Sword, and stroke a Servant of the High-*

B Priest's,

Priest's, and smote off his Ear. But our Saviour, instead of approving, condemned his Action, and commanded him to desist from his rash and unwarrantable Attempt: *Then said JESUS unto him, Put up again thy Sword into his place; for All they that take the Sword, shall perish with the Sword.*

For the better understanding of which words, you may please to observe these Two things.

First; That the true ground of the Malice of these Men against our Saviour, was, that He set up himself for the Messiah; and under that Character publish'd his Gospel to the World. His Life, and Conversation, were not only Blameless, but Exemplary: *He knew no Sin, neither was any Guile found in his Mouth.* Even the Jews themselves, when they the most desired it, could lay no Crime to his Charge, except it were this One, That by their Law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.

1 Pet. ii. 22.

Joh. xix. 7.

It was not therefore for any Personal Crimes that these Men pursued our Lord with so much Violence. But, He wrought many Miracles: He had but just before rais'd up Lazarus from the dead; and, as themselves reason'd in their last Council, in which they resolv'd upon his Death, *Joh. xi. 48. If we let him alone, all Men will believe on him; and the Romans shall come, and take away both our Place and Nation.*

This was his fault, and this was, in truth, all that they had to allege against him. Pilate him-

self knew that for Envy they had delivered him, Mat. xxvii.
18.
into his hands: And upon what their Envy was founded, I have before shewn; and the whole History of his Life sufficiently assures us of the Justice of the Remark.

But, Secondly: The other thing to be observed for the better understanding of the true Import of the Text is this; That our Saviour forbidding St. Peter to resist their Violence upon this account, that *All they that take the Sword, shall perish with the Sword*, may be understood to have spoken these Words in two very different Respects: Either with Relation to Those who came to Apprehend him, Or with Relation to the Apostle, who would have delivered him out of their hands.

If we consider them with relation to Those who came to Apprehend our Blessed Saviour, they will then carry this Sense; That St. Peter should not draw his Sword against them, but should leave their Punishment to God; who would not fail to return their Violence, in a signal manner, upon them. An Interpretation the rather to be consider'd, in that the following Event did eminently confirm the Truth of the Prediction: God having, for this very Reason, brought upon that whole Nation one of the most terrible Destructions that ever fell upon any People in the World.

But yet, for all this, I think the other, and

more common Application, of these words to St. Peter, as it is the more natural, so is it, for that Reason, the rather to be preferr'd; and then the meaning of them will be this: That He should consider *Who he was*, and *What he had done*? And remember how severe a Sentence God had pronounced against All such as, without a just warrant so to do, should take the Sword into their Hands; Gen. ix. 6. *Whoso sheddeth Man's Blood, by Man shall his Blood be shed.*

We will, if you please, joyn both these Interpretations together, and out of Both make up this One, strong Argument, against St. Peter's attempt upon this Occasion; That he ought not to have drawn his Sword against those to whom God had committed the Power of the Sword; but should have left it to him, to whom alone it belonged, to punish their Violence; Put up thy Sword into his place; For, All they that take the Sword, shall perish with the Sword.

In discoursing upon which words, with relation to the mournful Solemnity of this Day, I shall observe this Method.

- I. I will enquire, Why our Saviour would not suffer St. Peter to take the Sword in his Defence; but required him to leave his Cause to God, as the only proper Judge of it.
- II. I will shew, That it is still unlawful for any Christians, under the like Circumstances, to take the Sword.

Which having done ; I will then proceed, from the Principles before laid down, to consider,

III. What we are to judge of those, who notwithstanding so plain an Admonition to the contrary, not only *took the Sword* (tho' that had been too much) but *took it* against that *Royal Person*, who alone had the *rightful Power* of it.

I begin with the first of these; to enquire,

I. Why our *Saviour* would not suffer *St. Peter* to *take the Sword* in his Defence, but commanded him to leave his Cause to God, as the only proper Judge of it.

Now that must have been upon one of these Accounts: Either, (1st.) Because it is at *all Times*, and in *all Cases*, utterly unlawful for any *Disciple of Christ* to *take the Sword*. Or (2^{dly}.) Because at *that Time*, and in *those Circumstances*, it was not lawful for *St. Peter* to have done it.

As for the former of these, it is what even those who deny the use of the *Sword* to the *Christian Magistrate*, and will not allow him to draw it, either against an *Enemy* in a *lawful War*, or for the execution of *Justice* upon his own *Subjects*, will not adventure to say. Even they acknowledge that there is one case, at least, wherein an innocent use may be made of it; namely, for a *Man's own defence*, when he can no otherwise secure himself against the Violence of an unjust Aggressor.

But

But we need not be beholden to the Socinian for this Concession; the Holy Scriptures inform us, that there are several cases in which the Sword may lawfully be taken; and that not only by private Persons, for their own just, and necessary Defence; but by the Civil Magistrate too; both for the Punishment of Evil doers within, and to preserve his People from the Assaults of their Enemies without.

Many were the Crimes for which the Law of Moses required Malefactors to be put to Death. And with respect to one of them, that of Murder, God has expressly declared, that there is no other way to free the Land from Pollution, but by the Blood of him that committed it; Deut. xxxv. 33. *For Blood defileth the Land; And the Land cannot be cleansed of the Blood that is shed therein, but by the Blood of him that shed it.*

And least this should be thought inconsistent with the perfection of the Gospel, and to have expired with the other positive Laws of that Dispensation, St. Paul, in the thirteenth to the Romans, expressly puts the Sword into the Hands of the Civil Magistrate for the same ends, viz. The Protection of good Men, and the Punishment of the Wicked, and Unjust. For Rulers, says he, are not a Terror to Good Works, but to the Evil. *Wilt thou then not be afraid of the Power? do that which is Good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the Minister of God to Thee*

for Good. But if thou do that which is Evil, be Afraid: For he beareth not the SWORD in Vain: For he is, (here too) the Minister of God; A Revenger, not only allow'd, but Appointed by God, to execute Wrath upon him that does Evil.

The same is the account which St. Peter gives I Pet. ii. 13. us of the power of the Civil Magistrate. He requires us to submit to his Authority for the Lord's sake: And tells us, that it was given him for the same Ends St. Paul had before mentioned, for the Punishment of Evil-doers, and the Praise, the Protection, of them that do Well. And the very Passage of the Text, would Men but allow it a reasonable Construction, implies the very same thing; namely, That all those who take the Sword; as St. Peter now did, without a lawful Warrant for their so doing; should perish with the Sword, should be punish'd with death for it.

It is therefore without all Controversy, lawful for Christians, both Magistrates, and Others, in several cases, to take the Sword: And, by consequence, St. Peter's Offence must have consisted in this, that at that time, and in those Circumstances, it was not lawful for him to have taken it. Let us therefore enquire (2dly.) What it was that made it so unlawful?

In answer whereunto we are told by some, that the reason why our Saviour reprov'd St. Peter for taking the Sword, was this; That God had appointed him to die; that for this End He

came

came into the World ; and that the *Apostle* therefore, in opposing those who were come to take him in order thereunto, withstood *God's decree* ; and, in effect, fought against *God*. And indeed it must be allow'd, that the words which our *Saviour* subjoyn'd upon this Occasion, do favour such an Opinion. *Thinkest thou, that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve Legions of Angels : But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfill'd, that thus it must be ?* And *St. John* either abridging his Discourse, or relating some other Passage which *St. Matthew* had omitted, speaks yet more expressly to the same Purpose ; *John xviii. 11. Put up thy Sword into the Sheath : The Cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it ?*

But tho' it must therefore be granted, that the Attempt of *St. Peter* was, upon this account also, worthy of Blame ; and as such censured by our *Blessed Lord* ; yet that does not hinder but that his Action might have been, as indeed it was, in other respects, Rash, and Unwarrantable. And so the words of our *Saviour* plainly intimate : They contain a Reason of perpetual force ; such as had nothing to do with *God's Decrees* ; namely, That all those who should take the *Sword*, that is, after such a manner, and in such Circumstances, as the *Apostle* here did, should perish with the *Sword*, should be worthy of Death for their so doing.

To understand therefore the true ground of our *Saviour's* Reproof in these Words, we must consider, not what *St. Peter's* fault was with respect to *God's Decree* for the *Suffering of Christ*; which they have no manner of relation to; but what it was that made his Attempt so Criminal towards Man, as to be a *Capital Offence*; and, even in our Lord's Judgment, worthy of Death.

Was it that He defended his Blessed Master against the *Assaults* of Those, who, without any *lawful Authority*, were come to seize Him? But this is no more than what the *Law of Nature*, and the *Right of Self-preservation*, prescribes; and the *positive Laws* of all well-regulated Societies allow of; *viz. To repel an unjust Violence*; and, where other Means fail, *To defend a Man's Life, by force*, against those who, by force, would take it away.

Or, was it that He exceeded the Bounds of that Liberty which this *natural Right of Self-defence*, and *Self-preservation*, in such cases, gives to every One, against Those who seek their Destruction? But neither doth this appear. He made no undue Haste: He smote not before he saw what they ^{Mat. xxvi.} were about to Do. He tarried till they had *actually* ^{50. Jo. xviii.} *laid hands upon our Saviour*, and declared their ^{49.} Resolution of carrying him forcibly away.

Was it his fault that he did not tarry for the Direction of our Lord, in answer to that Question which One of them, at the same instant, had put ^{Cajetan. Jentac. vi. Q. 3.} to him, *Shall we smite with the Sword?* But in ^{such}

such cases as this there is no room for Deliberation: And supposing his Action to have been otherwise Innocent, it is hard to conceive how this alone could merit so severe a Reproof; much less make that which was in its self lawful, by so small a Defect, become a Capital Crime.

Id. Ibid. Or lastly; Was his fault no other than what some Politic Interpreters of the *Church of Rome* have supposed; That He rashly engaged against so great Odds, that He could expect nothing less than a certain Ruine from his Undertaking? But where both the *Cause* is *Just*, and the *Means* that are made use of for the *Defence* of it are *Lawful*; the Greatness of the Danger enhances the Glory of the Action, and adds to the Honour of him who has the Courage to undertake it. At the most, in such a case, the *Apostle* would have been only guilty of an Imprudence: It might have cost Him his Life; but could by no means have render'd him so Criminal as to be *worthy to Die*.

Voss.
Harm.
Evange-
lic. lib. ii.
cap. i.

In short; The only thing that can be imagined to have been capable of fixing so severe a Censure upon St. *Peter's* Action must have been this; That the *Persons* against whom he drew his Sword were the *Ministers of Justice*; and commission'd by a *legal Authority* to take our Blessed *Saviour*: And that being such, they were not to be *Resisted* in the *Execution* of their Office. And so St. *Matthew* tells us, *Ver. 47. While He yet spake, lo Judas, One of the Twelve, and with him a great Multitude,*
with

with Swords, and Staves, from the Chief-Priests, and Elders of the People; that is, from Those who had the *Lawful Authority* to send Them. But St. *John* is more expresse; He adds, that they were the *Roman Soldiers*, who guarded the Temple at the Feast, with their *Captain*, or *Chief-Officer*, at their Head. So that St. *Peter* could not but have known who They were; and must therefore have been the more inexcusable, in offering any Violence to Them, *Jo. xviii. 12.* Then the Band, and the Captain, and Officers of the Jews, took Jesus and bound him. And it appears from St. *Luke*, that His Apprehension was not only made by the Order of the *Sanhedrim*, but that some of that Council were present in Person at the Execution of their Order, *Chap. xxii. 52.* Then said Jesus to the Chief-Priests, and Captains of the Temple, and the Elders, which were come to Him.

These were the Persons who came to take our Saviour, and this was the *Authority* by which they did it. And therefore St. *Peter's* fault must have consisted in this, that He drew his Sword against Those who had a *Lawful Power* to Apprehend Him. For however the *Jews* were at this time a Conquer'd People under the Power of the *Romans*, and Governed by the *Emperor's Lieutenant*; yet still the *Great Council* at *Jerusalem* was allow'd to retain its *Authority*, and to Exercise its Power, by their own Laws, as before.

Grot. in
loc. Et de
Jur. B. ac
P. lib. i.
cap. iii.
§. 3. n. 7.

It has, I know, been doubted by some Learned Men, whether they still retained the *Power of Life and Death*: And one Passage there is, in this very History, which seems to imply that they did not; *Jo. xviii. 31.* where demanding Judgment of *Pilate* against our *Saviour*, they told him that it was not *Lawful for Them to put any Man to Death*. Let this be as it will; Thus much is certain, that They had *Authority to Apprehend Him*; To *examine* into the *Crimes* which should be laid against Him; To have *punish'd* him with some lesser *Punishment* Themselves; and, if they saw occasion, to have deliver'd him to the *Roman Governor* for the *last, and highest, Sentence*. And therefore, whatsoever Malice there may have been, (as certainly there was enough of that) in their Prosecution of our *Lord*, yet hitherto they proceeded in a *legal Method* against Him: And, doing so, it was not lawful for any *private Persons*, such as *St. Peter* and the rest of the *Apostles* were, to oppose them with Force in what they did. This was the true ground of our *Saviour's* Reproof; And it is thus faithfully and judiciously Paraphrased, by our Learned *Dr. Hammond*; “ *Put up thy Sword*
“ *into his place*; Do nothing contrary to Law;
“ *For All They that take the Sword shall perish with*
“ *the Sword*; All that draw and use the Sword
“ without (*and how much more against*) the Au-
“ thority of Those which bear the Sword, shall
“ fall

“ fall themselves by it ; shall incur the Punishment
“ of Death.

Having thus endeavour'd, with all the clearness I could, to represent to you the true Reason of that Reproof which our *Saviour* gave to *St. Peter* upon this occasion, I proceed

II. To shew, That, upon the same grounds, it *still is, and will ever be, Unlawful*, for any *other Christians*, in the like Circumstances, to *take the Sword*.

Among all the popular Pretences that have been set up to justify *private Persons* in their unwarrantable Attempts against *publick Authority*, there is none that carries a fairer Appearance, or has done greater Mischief in the World, than this ; That it *is lawful to defend Religion with the Sword* ; and that whatsoever the Enterprize would otherwise have been thought, this shall transform it into a Glorious, and Heroical Undertaking.

How far this Opinion has carried some deluded Zealots, I shall not need to say : I would to God our own Histories did not afford us too many Instances of it. But this I take to be clear, and certain ; That had we no other Passage of Holy Scripture to convince us of the Falseness of such a Pretension ; No Directions of any ancient Writers to inform us what the Duty of a Christian in times of Persecution is ; No Examples of Antiquity to shew us what his Behaviour ought to be ; This single Passage, and Example, alone, might suffice

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to

to assure us, how directly contrary such a Principle must be, both to the *Practice* of our *Saviour*, and the *Rules* of his *Gospel*.

For, indeed, what can any one pretend to offer in Excuse of such an Attempt now, that St. *Peter* might not with greater Reason have alledg'd in Vindication of himself upon this Occasion?

Has the *True Religion* such a *Right* on its side, as to be able to warrant any Violence against those who oppose it; and would oppress us upon the account of it? But surely no one can, with equal Evidence, prove his *Church*, or *Faith*, to be the *Right* now, that St. *Peter* could have demonstrated that for which he would have engaged, to have been the *true Religion* heretofore. Nor can any more maliciously, or injuriously oppose any *Religion*, or persecute its *Professors*; than the *Jews*, in the present Case, did both our *Lord*, and his *Gospel*.

Or shall we say, as some have done, that *Inferior Magistrates* may be *Resisted*, tho' the *Supreme* may not; when they would otherwise destroy an Innocent Person, tho' in a *legal way*, and with an *appearance* of *Justice*? But those who here pursued our *Saviour* were no other: They were the *Subordinate Powers*; Men permitted, or at the most intrusted, and commissioned by the *Emperor*, to Govern under him, by certain Laws, and within certain Limits prescribed to them for that purpose. And for the Person against whom they acted, I shall

shall not need to say, that the Holy *Jesus* was one of the most *Innocent*, that was ever oppress'd under a shew of *legal Power*, and *Authority*.

Or, lastly; Tho' the *lawful Magistrate*, whether *Supreme*, or *Subordinate*, may not be *resisted* in the Exercise of their *Authority*, shall We pretend that *Those* who are *Commissioned by Them* may be withstood? But such were *those* who now came to apprehend our *Saviour*. Neither *Pilate*, nor the *High-Priest*, were there in Person; nor the *Council* in a Body: But they sent their *Officers*, and *Soldiers*; the *Captain* of the *Guard*, and it may be some of their *own Members* along with them, to see that they did their Duty. But they had a *lawful Authority* for what they did: Their *Power* was *just*, tho' at present employ'd on a very wicked Design; and, therefore, their Procedure being *Lawful*, they were not to be *Resisted*, no not in defence of our *Saviour Christ* himself.

And if neither the *Malice* of the *Jews*, nor the *Innocence* of our *Lord*; If neither the *Truth* of our *Religion* persecuted in its *Founder*, nor the apparent Marks of *Malice* and *Envy*, of *Violence* and *Oppression*, which appeared in the whole Course of their Prosecution of Him; were sufficient to warrant *St. Peter* to draw the *Sword* in his *Defence*, against that *Legal Authority* by which they Acted; We must conclude, that neither will any of these Pretences suffice to justify any other Christians, in the like Circumstances, now: But, if it shall

please God at any time to permit the *Lawful Powers* to be against Us, and make them that hate us, to rule over us; We must follow the Example of our Blessed Master; and submit patiently to their *Authority*; and not, with this warm *Apostle*, take the *Sword* against those, to whom God has committed the *Power of the Sword*.

Let this then suffice to shew, what the true Christian Doctrine, of *Submission* to the *Civil Magistrate*, is. I shall not here enquire whether some may not possibly have misapplied these *Principles*; or have stretched them farther than they ought to have done; and, by that means, have led both themselves, and others, into great Mistakes, and no less Inconveniencies. What that *Authority* in every *State*, or *Country* is, to which such a *Subjection*, as I have now been speaking of, is due; and against which no *Resistance*, no not to defend the *Best Cause*, or the most *Innocent Person* in the *World*, may be used by any of the *Community*; is a Point which the *Municipal Laws*, and *Constitution*, of every *State*, and *Country*, must determine. But that wherever that *Supreme Power*, and *Authority*, is lodged, or in whomsoever it resides, to which God has commanded us to be *Subject*, not only for *Wrath*, but also for *Conscience sake*: Concerning which *St. Paul* has laid down this Rule, *Let every Soul be Subject to the Higher Powers*: And *St. Peter* himself declar'd, That We must submit to it for the *Lord's sake*; we are bound to pay

pay either an Active, or Passive Obedience to it; must either Do what it Requires, or Suffer what it Inflicts; This is without Controversy the standing *Doctrine of Christianity*, and has been confirmed by the *practice of the best Christians* in all Ages of the Church.

Which being so, let us go on finally, upon these Principles, to consider

III. What we are to judge of Those who, notwithstanding so plain an Admonition, not only *took the Sword* (tho' that had been too much;) But *cut off* with it that *Royal Person*, who alone had the *Rightful Power* of it.

And here I cannot follow either a plainer, or surer Guide, than our *Laws* themselves; which speak not only with *Authority*, but *Approbation* too; and tell us, in effect, what the *Sense* of the whole Nation is, or at least ought to be, both of *Them*, and their *Proceedings*. The * FACT its See Stat. 12 Car. ii. cap. xi. self, they call, a *Horrid, Execrable, Detestable Murder*; An *impious Fact*, an *unparallel'd Treason*: The * COURT which decreed it, a *Traiterous* lb. c. xxx. *Assembly*; a *prodigious*, and *unheard of Tribunal*. The * PERSONS who thus unwarrantably drew the *Sword* against their own Sovereign, they brand as a parcel of *Wretched Men, Desperately Wicked, Hardned in their Impiety*. And, lastly, as to the * PRINCIPLES upon which they proceeded, the same *Laws* declare, "That by the *Undoubted*, and " *Fundamental Laws of this Kingdom*, neither the

“ Peers of this Realm, nor the Commons, nor both
 “ together; in Parliament, or out of Parliament;
 “ Collectively, or Representatively; nor any O-
 “ ther Persons whatsoever; ever had, have, hath,
 “ or ought to have, any Coercive Power over the
 “ Persons of the Kings of this Realm.

Such is the Censure which our *Laws* have pass'd upon the Murder of our Royal Sovereign, and the Persons who committed it: And the same is the Sense which both the *Word of God*, and the *Laws* of all other Nations, teach Us to have of Both.

See my
 Lord Cla-
 rendon's
 History of
 the Civil
 Wars,

Vol. I. fol.
 p. 6. 22,
 52, 53, 54,
 55, 58, &c.
 221.

For to allow that some things had been done, under the Authority of that unfortunate Prince, less regularly than were to have been wish'd: That the *Prerogative* had been strain'd to an exorbitant Height, and the Subject too much provoked to complain, if not of the King Himself, yet of Those who were about Him; and should have Advised, and Acted, more moderately than they did. To grant that when the *Parliament* met, with which our Troubles began; it was Excusable, or even Fitting, for it to have redressed those Grievances, and reduced the *Prerogative* within its just bounds; and that Those therefore who enter'd upon the proper Methods of doing this, in a *Parliamentary way*, without any Ill Designs either against the Person, or Government, of the King, were not to be blamed: Yet certainly when this was done, and thereupon such † *Acts* were passed as not only abundantly repaired whatever the

† See
 16 Car. I.
 cap. 10,
 11, 14,
 16, 20.

the Subject had suffered before, but sufficiently secured Him against any more Invasions either of his *Liberty*, or *Property*, for the time to Come ; for Men to proceed farther still, and without any *lawful Authority*, or *evident Necessity*, enter into a *War* against their *Sovereign*, who had so far condescended to all their just Desires, must needs have been as *Illegal*, as it was *Unreasonable* ; and bespeak Those who did it to have *taken the Sword* in that Sense which our *Saviour* here forbad, and all Good Men have ever Condemned.

Had that excellent Prince, indeed, never called his *last Parliament* at all, nor given any Opportunity to his People to redress their Grievances by the proper Methods of it : Had He not only continued to insist upon those Pretensions, which some had set up under the shelter of his Authority ; but so far improved them, as utterly to set aside the *Laws of the Realm*, and to *act Arbitrarily*, not only *without Law*, but *against it* : And when nothing else would do, Had He chosen rather to *Desert the Government*, than to *Rule* according to his own Oath, and the *Fundamental Laws*, and *Limitations* of it : This might have warranted an oppressed People to *take the Sword*, for the *necessary defence* of their *Laws*, and *Constitution* ; and their *Religion*, and *Liberties*, founded thereupon. But to take up Arms against a *King*, whose Excesses had been Moderate, and whose Necessities pressed him, contrary to his

own Inclinations, to run into the most of Them; But especially, who had already, without Force, not only freely Redressed the Grievances of his People, but abundantly Repaired Them; and secured Them against the like Attempts for the future; this must needs have been an unwarrantable Enterprize; A War as Unjustifiable in its Rise, as it proved Fatal in its Consequences.

Nor will the pretence of *Religion* at all alter the Case, or make their *taking of the Sword* ever the more Lawful, tho' we should suppose that there had been as just Cause of Complaint in that Respect, as some Men affirmed; tho' it is, after all, certain that there was not. It was upon this ground, as we have seen, that our *Saviour* was persecuted by the *Jews*. They sought his destruction for this very Reason, that He professed himself to be the *Messiah*, and would have introduced a *new Religion* among Them, contrary, as they supposed, to the Law of *Moses*. And yet *Christ* himself thought not this a sufficient warrant for *St. Peter* to take the *Sword* against the *lawful Magistrate*; tho' He took it only in defence of his *Master*, without the least design of disturbing the Publick Peace by it.

But alas! this is yet but a small part of that Guilt we are now Assembled to Commemorate, and Bewail. Our furious Zealots did not only take the *Sword* against the *Authority* of their *Prince*, but they Stained it with the *Blood* of his *Sacred Person*.

Person. A Wickedness hardly to be parallel'd in any other Country; nor ever to be mention'd by Our selves without Shame, and Detestation.

It was the Question of Holy *David* to *Abisbai*, when he wou'd have smitten *Saul*; and it contains the Sense of all other Wise, and Good Men, in the like case; 1 *Sam.* xxii. 9. *Who can stretch forth his hand against the LORD's Anointed, and be Guiltless?* And yet, at that time, *Saul* was a Prince rejected by the same God who had made him King before; and *David* was appointed to Reign over *Israel* in his stead. So that *Saul* was little more than *King in Fact*, but *David* had the *Right*; and that by an immediate *divine Appointment*, and *Authority*. But He had been the *Anointed* of the *Lord*; and He was still in Possession of the Govern-^{ment}; and there was, upon both ^{these} Accounts, such a Respect due to Him, that his *Person* was *Sacred*; so that no One could stretch out his Hand against him, and be *Guiltless*.

Nay more; *Saul* at that very time, pursued *David* for this reason, that He knew God had *Anointed him to be King* in his stead; tho' *David* had done nothing to disturb him in his Govern-ment, any more than He would now suffer any thing to be done to destroy his *Person*. And yet, neither the *Decree of God*, nor the *Violence of Saul*; Neither his *Wickedness* in the sight of the One, nor his *Injustice* towards the Other; were thought sufficient by *David* to warrant Him to make any Attempt

Attempt upon his Life; tho' God seemed by a singular disposition of his Providence to have deliver'd him into his Hands. But He left his Cause to God, and appealed to Him as the *only Judge of Sovereign Princes*, Verses 10, 11. *David said farthermore; As the Lord liveth, the LORD shall smite Him; Or his day shall come to Die; Or He shall descend into Battel and perish. The LORD forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the LORD's Anointed!*

Vid. Op-
tat. Mile-
vit. lib. ii.
p. 47.
Edit. Ult.
Grot. de
Jur. B. ac
P. lib. i.
cap. iv.
§. 7. n. 6.

This was *David's Conduct*, and these the Principles upon which he founded it: And the same have been both the Notions and the Behaviour, of the Wisest and Best Men, upon the like Occasions, ever since. But our Cruel Murderers had other Thoughts; They Acted by other Measures. God deliver'd their *Sovereign* into their hands, and they laid hold of the opportunity to Destroy him. They *shed the Blood of War in Peace*; and made Themselves at once the *Arraigners*, the *Judges*, and the *Executioners*, of their *Own King*.

A horrid, execrable, detestable Wickedness! The *Scandal* of our Country; the *Wound* and *Reproach* of our *Holy Religion*! I would to God I might stop here; but I must add, the *Guilt*, the *Sin*, the *Pollution* of the *whole Kingdom*! The *Effects* of which we have *seen*, we have *felt*; we continue both to *see*, and *feel*, at this very day.

Oh! may it be the Subject of our *Sorrow* and *Repentance* too! May we never think of it with-

out Shame; never speak of it but with an Execration!

But more especially upon this Day, set apart by Publick Authority; on purpose to engage us to a *National Humiliation* of our selves for so great a Wickedness; may we All sincerely deprecate the *Vengeance of God*, which this *Royal Blood* calls aloud for to Heaven against Us!

May no *Profane Persons* either make a Mock of this Piety, or neglect to joyn in the Exercises of it! No *deluded Zealots*, either continue to justify what was then done amiss; or to entertain such Principles, as may ever lead them to the like Villany!

May the *Sword* never more be taken among Us but by *Lawful Authority*: Either to execute Justice against Evil-doers at home, or to defend Us against the Assaults of our Enemies abroad! And then may we always draw it with success; to the Punishment of the One, and our common Safety, and Preservation, against the Other!

May our *Religion* evermore support our *Loyalty*; and our *Loyalty* be so happy as to defend, and secure, our *Religion*. This will make both our *Princes* Safe, and our *Country* Happy. While the *Sword* is thus used, there can be no danger from it to Either; but, on the contrary, it will protect, and support Both. This will suppress Malefactors within, and guard Us against Oppressors without. In a word; By thus *Lawfully taking*
the

the Sword, in Subordination to Those who have the Power of it, We shall become a United, Peaceable, Flourishing People; as by the contrary use of it, we were made a miserable, divided, ruined Nation: Till God in his Mercy restored Us to that Orderly Frame of Government, from which We had departed; And in which, may He vouchsafe to continue Us, and our Posterity, till all these States shall be dissolved; and the Kingdoms of the Earth, become the Kingdoms of God, and his Christ! Amen, Amen.



FINIS.

